

DNREC Honors Young Environmentalists, Volunteer of the Year, Youth Fishing Winner at Delaware State Fair

Governor John Carney (right) and DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin congratulate DNREC's High School Young Environmentalist of the Year, Julia Rial of Sussex Academy /DNREC photo

At the Delaware State Fair in Harrington yesterday evening, Governor John Carney and DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin honored three dedicated Delaware students as DNREC's Young Environmentalists of the Year for their work to protect, restore or enhance our state's natural resources, along with a DNREC Volunteer of the Year and this year's winner of the annual Youth Fishing Tournament.

"Every Delawarean, no matter their age, can have an impact in protecting and conserving our natural resources, while also raising awareness for environmental stewardship. At ages 9, 11 and 18, these three young people have taken a stand as environmental advocates who are already making a difference today for a better tomorrow," said Secretary Garvin of the 2021 class of Young Environmentalists. "Today, we also recognize a volunteer who has had a long-term impact on DNREC's Emergency Response mission, and a young angler who caught the biggest fish in this year's Youth Fishing Tournament, a conservation-minded event to introduce children to the joy of catching – and releasing – a fish."



DNREC's 2021 Young Environmentalists, left to right, Maggie Wieber, Julia

Young Environmentalist of the Year Awards:

▪ **Elementary School:**

Rowan Smith, age 9, of Dover, independently formed a plant club in her third grade class at Banneker Elementary and uses her recess time to lead nature walks and plant investigations, sharing plant facts she has learned from avidly reading and researching Delaware plants.

▪ **Middle School:**

Maggie Wieber, age 11, is very active as a third-year member in Kent County's Peach Blossom 4-H Club, taking on projects involving wildlife, woodworking and community service. Upon learning of a need for bat boxes at Killens Pond and Trap Pond state parks, Maggie researched plans, solicited funds from the Delaware 4-H Foundation to buy materials, developed kits with pre-cut parts and enlisted eight fellow 4-H members to construct 10 boxes, which were donated to the two parks to provide nesting areas for these important insect-eaters.

▪ **High School:**

Julia Rial, age 18, of Lewes, has planned beach cleanups in Sussex County, organized tree plantings and made videos at James Farm in Ocean View and founded the Delaware Youth Chapter of Extinction Rebellion with her friend Jade Carter to work in her community on environmental issues and sustainability. In February, for the Shepard's Office in Georgetown, an organization that helps homeless and needy people, Julia and Jade gathered a dozen volunteers and organized a "sustainable free market" that collected five truckloads of usable goods, keeping the items out of landfills; the event also included hot lunches for 100 needy people donated by local businesses.



DNREC Volunteer of
the Year Richard
Morris with
Governor Carney

Now in its 28th year, DNREC's Young Environmentalist of the Year Awards program recognizes Delaware students whose actions have helped protect, restore or enhance our natural resources by initiating an innovative project, practicing environmental stewardship, increasing public awareness or demonstrating environmental ethics. For more information, visit dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/young-environmentalists.

DNREC Volunteer of the Year Award:

New Castle County resident **Richard Morris** received DNREC's Volunteer of the Year Award. As a volunteer firefighter with the Belvedere Fire Company, which partners with the DNREC Emergency Response team, for more than 15 years and 2,250 hours Morris has served as the primary keeper and driver of DNREC's Hazmat 30, a bright red 60-foot, 60,000-pound emergency vehicle nicknamed "The Beast." In 2019 alone, Morris drove the Beast to more than 50 hazardous incident calls.

"Not only does he get the Beast safely to the location, Richard is an active participant upon arrival, directing operations until DNREC staff arrives, including deploying oil dry containment booms, setting up recovery systems and operating the Beast's Safety Vac System," said DNREC Emergency Response Chief Jamie Bethard. "He also has the biggest heart, and without his tireless dedication and commitment, pollution incidents in New Castle County would last significantly longer and be more costly to remediate."

2021 Youth Fishing Tournament Winner:

Kane Messina, age 9, of Millsboro, received this year's top

trophy for catching a 21-inch bass in the 35th annual [Youth Fishing Tournament](#) held June 5. Established by the DNREC Division of Fish and Wildlife and sponsored by the Delaware Natural Resources Police, the tournament introduces youth to the sport of fishing and teaches the catch-and-release approach to conservation.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with @DelawareDNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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